A CATION IN A BUGGY

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"THERE WAS NOT A BIT OF OIL TO BE SEEN; THE IRON—OR IS IT STEEL?—WAS DRY."—P. 69.

A VACATION IN A BUGGY

BY

MARIA LOUISE POOL

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* The narrative of "A Vacation in a Buggy" first appeared in part in a series of letters to the *New York Evening Post*.

A VACATION IN A BUGGY.

I.

AT THE START.

It was Godfrey Greylock who said: "Somebody has called Berkshire the Piedmont of America. I do not know how just the appellation may be, but I do know that if Piedmont can rightly be called the Berkshire of Europe, it must be a very delightful region."

It is our purpose to prove this delightfulness; not by means of steam-engines, that snatch from the eyes the joy of a landscape almost as soon as it has been presented; but by

locomotion through the agency of horse-flesh, which shall be controlled at the whim of the driver. We are very humble, however. It is but one horse that we have, "warranted sound and kind in all harness," with a light covered buggy of that shape which permits of several packages in the box behind. The "calash" part of it can be tipped back at will. We are two, and we take turns at driving. We are not above stopping at any tempting spot, and taking the horse out of the shafts while he and we lunch and generally refresh ourselves. We are also provided with a small box of "patent axle grease" and a monkey-wrench; so that we need not be dependent upon stablemen for the satisfaction of knowing that our wheels will not take fire for lack of lubrication.

In the first twelve hours out, however, we have learned that we are

going to pay dear for having said: "We shall be able to grease the wheels for ourselves." Having the matter thus in our hands, we are continually asking each other, "Do you think there is any danger of a hot-box?" Theoretically we know that a carriage will go several scores of miles in safety after the application of oil in the proper places. But we become morbid on this subject. I am inclined to ascribe this unhealthy state of our minds in regard to wheels to the remark of the man who started us off from Catskill. He said:

"Now, you ladies 'd better look out and hev your carriage oiled every night. It 's new, and new spindles need to be looked after plaguey sharp. When you put up at night, you tell 'em to clean off the spindles 'n' to put a drop of oil on. Not only tell 'em, but see 'em do it."

This was not reassuring to two

women who had never before known that a buggy had spindles, or that new spindles were more in need of looking after than old ones. Also it was depressing to have it suggested that hostlers and stablemen generally needed to be watched. Fortunately our courage rose as difficulties began to appear. In consequence of this remark of the livery proprietor, we were not out of Catskill village before we bought our box of axle grease and our wrench. Then we had a comforting sense of power, a certain feeling of reserved force.

We drove on to the ferry, were taken across, and our journey had really begun. We were homeward bound to the southeastern part of Massachusetts, putting in execution a long-cherished plan of going thus leisurely down the State. Perhaps we were daring in that we should thus come upon the Berkshire Hills

with eyes so fresh from the mightier Catskill Mountains; but it was a daring that promised to be full of pleasure.

It was more than warm, it was scorchingly hot, when we went on the ferry-boat to cross the river. Even the broad surface of the water was unstirred by any breeze, and the sun poured light and heat out of a pale blue, smiting sky, wherein was no fleck of a cloud. One man, leaning, in his shirt sleeves, against a post of the boat, looked at us some time in silence, then he said that he hoped we were not going far, for the chances were that the horse would get sunstruck. This remark immediately made us feel cruel. He went on to tell us in a deprecating way that women most always were hard on a horse; he did not know why; he supposed it might be because they did n't know much about

horses. For his part, even if a woman was well-meaning, he 'd rather let the Devil have a horse of his than a woman.

We kept silence, though our hearts burned with anger. We saw that our steed was sweating slightly, although it had not yet travelled at all. But then we, who pretended to sit at our ease in a shaded carriage, were perspiring freely.

"I don't mean no offence," said the man after a short time, during which he looked intently at the animal. He lifted himself heavily from his post and went and opened the horse's mouth, carefully examining the teeth. We sat helpless and let him do it. He announced that we had rather of a good beast, but we 'd better put a wet sponge on the top of his head if we were going any distance. A wet sponge might save his life. He was all right now, but

this weather was enough to kill a salamander.

With this, the man lounged forward, and we could only see him from a distance.

The wet sponge sounded reasonable to us. We could hardly wait until we came to a place where we could follow this advice. We said that this man, though so very disagreeable, doubtless knew about horses, and this was a mysterious knowledge that commanded our deepest respect.

Claverack is a quiet place that lies diagonally opposite Catskill, a little to the north. It is extremely quiet. It has a boarding-school—the Hudson River Institute—but when we passed through the village, all the pupils must have been housed, for nothing was to be seen of any movement, and no sound was to be heard. No one was in the road, but then it

was natural that those who had a shelter from the sun would be within that shelter. The trees hung perfectly still everywhere, and the sun shone. It was that kind of weather when every one says, "There must be a change soon," and when an earthquake or a tornado bursting out of the stillness would surprise no one. Our horse had walked every yard of the way since leaving the river, but there was a white "lather" wherever the harness touched.

In the extremely unpretentious store in Claverack there were no sponges. The clerk advised us to go to Hudson if we wanted sponges. He said they did not keep much of a stock, because everybody went to Hudson. It was plain enough to be seen that everybody would have to go to that city, or to some other, if they wanted any thing.

We had hoped to reach Pittsfield

on the first day out, intending to spend a day or two there, but this hope was relinquished before we had been two hours on the journey. It was impossible to ask a horse to go out of a foot-pace. At every watering trough or spring we let him drink. I think he soon came to the conclusion that the man on the ferry had slandered women. Sometimes, climbing a hill, we looked back and saw the Catskills behind, solemn, glorious, beneath the bright sun. They seemed to ask us if we had the presumption to think that we could enjoy other scenery, remembering them.

If one has travelled among these secluded villages of Columbia County, he will know that some are very secluded indeed, and that hotels are not plentiful. Claverack Township has many hamlets, and we hardly knew whether we were still in that

town or had reached Ghent. Great heat is as bewildering in its way as great cold. At last we found that we had strayed off the best road, had passed Ghent, and were in the outskirts of Chatham. It did not matter much, however, if we could find a place to put up. We met a few pigs and cows straying listlessly along the roadside. Even pigs had none of their customary mischievous alertness in their appearance. They also were "under the weather." It was now high noon, and, if possible, more breathless than ever. We had mounted a hill, and looked down the long road that twisted before us, with very little shelter from trees, and no house in sight. If there had been strength left in us for views, we should have been happier, for the country everywhere was inexpressibly lovely. Hill and dale stretched into hill and dale, and all were green

with the summer verdure, as yet unsullied. The clusters of houses here and there gave the inhabited look which is so pleasant. We stopped the horse under a sprawling oak tree, and looked about us, trying to fancy that we felt a breeze from somewhere. Instead, however, the heat seemed to rise from the hot earth as well as to come from the unpitying sky. We began to have a sense of being stranded in an unknown and unoccupied country. True, there were houses in sight, but they were beyond us. We had not met a person since we entered this road. Pigs and cows suggested that they had owners, but where were they?

We had almost decided to give up looking for a shelter for the present, and to take out the horse and let us all eat. This kind of an experience was not in our intention when we started. One does not expect to

feel thus desolate in a settled and civilized country; but we may have been morbid.

We had left the carriage and were taking a comprehensive survey around the horizon. Now we saw what decided us to go on still farther in search of a farm-house, for it was not to be expected that we should find an inn of any kind. In the northwest, low down, was the first appearance of a cloud—a bank of a dense blue color that seemed perfectly still, as if it would carry the deceptive hope that it would never rise and would always be innocent as now. But even in the five minutes that we spent looking at it it slowly widened, keeping its solid look. But there was no wind yet. That bank looked as if it were capable of a good many things when it should begin to demonstrate.

We made ready to climb despond-

ently into the buggy; we pulled up the horse's head from the eating of grass. At the same moment I was aware of a slight rustle across the road, and a pug dog crossed deliberately in the dust, and snuffed inquiringly about our skirts. He was of that degree of beautiful ugliness which was so fashionable a short time ago, and which still is not entirely "gone out." This creature, with its turned-up nose, and melancholy, protruding eyes, did not entirely disdain us. After a moment's investigation, he sat down on his haunches and gave himself up entirely to panting and snapping at flies. But why should a pug dog, which has no temptation to hunt, be wandering about in this way? Had he not a companion? Evidently he had, for the tall bushes parted again, and a human being appeared. I wish I could say that this person was an

artist with portfolio under arm, a picturesque beard, and a general readiness to fall in love. But it was a feminine being who came in sight and who stepped over the road, as her pug had done, and who was panting nearly as much. A girl in a brown linen short dress, heavy boots, and a broad hat. She had a newly cut maple staff in her hand, and was naturally absorbed in trying to live in this heat, and could be very little interested in any thing while the thermometer continued in its present state.

She looked at us, sat down on a stone in the shade, took off her hat, and began to fan herself. We looked at her, and did not get into the carriage.

Her hair was cut short and her face was tanned so dark that but for her features she hardly seemed to belong to the white race.

Finally I said: "I think we are lost."

She laughed a little, and replied: "And I know that I am lost."

After this there was a silence, which was broken by the girl, who remarked that she supposed that this road must lead somewhere. To this my friend responded that she doubted that, for we had been following it for two hours, and had not come to anywhere.

"It 's a road, anyway," said the girl, "and I am thankful for that, for I 've been in the fields and pastures since morning. They say it 's easy to get lost about here, but I 'm used to wandering, and never lost my way before. I 'm about played out"—she used this phrase as calmly as if she were a boy—"and I must beg you to let me crowd in with you. It 's going to be a bully old tempest, too, when that cloud gets up," point-

ing a brown hand toward the west. "I think we 'd better be pegging. Lion 's about ready to give up the ghost, too, are n't you Lion?" to the dog, who gave one languid flirt of his curled tail in response.

The girl, who, we concluded, was about fourteen, and who spoke as if she were educated, though fond of slang, now asked if we had a bottle of milk in the carriage, for Lion would like a little. But we had no milk, so Lion had none.

We knew it would be wise to be "pegging," so we all crowded into the buggy, the girl crouching down in front and holding the pug in her arms. We asked if she had any advice to give as to direction, which was a foolish question, for there was nothing to do but to keep on. She expressed her belief that, in time, we should find a farm-house, but previously we should probably get a

drenching, to say nothing of being frightened half to death by the tempest.

"It 'll be a regular ripper," she said. "After such a spell as this it always is. And you can't stop under any trees, for you know you are about sure to get struck if you do. And Lion is afraid of thunder."

II.

A WASHED WORLD.

It turned out that the pug dog was not the only person in our buggy who was afraid of thunder. As we went down the hill, after taking in the dog and the "dog's lady," we all kept twisting our necks to see, if we could, how fast the cloud was rising. But very soon we were so far down that we could see nothing in the west, and would not have known that there was a cloud there for any appearance in the heavens now visible to us, for the sun shone, and the sky was blue, and the heat continued. No house, and no sign of human beings. In a pasture there was an awning of boards put upon four posts, appar-

ently for the shelter of the horses feeding there. We hesitated, and discussed whether we should stop here, and finally decided that the horses might not like the intrusion. We might get kicked, even if we escaped the lightning.

The road was so rough and in places so steep that the slowest pace was all we could venture upon, which, in part, accounts for our long absence from any village.

All at once, while the sun was still as bright as ever, we heard the first low sound of thunder. At the same moment the pug bristled up the hairs along its backbone and growled with the thunder.

"You see Lion?" said the girl, with animation. "It 's going to be a banger, or he never 'd do that. Can't you drive a bit faster?"

No, we could not, for the road was inclined like the roof of a house, and

was covered with loose stones. Whatever happened, we could not at this early stage of our journey risk breaking the horse's legs.

The girl stood up on the tips of her toes, and, clinging to the sides, essayed to look back over the buggy-top.

"My eye!" she cried out, "you 'd better believe it 's coming! It 's all green and black, and in two minutes the sun 'll be in it. There comes the wind; the trees way off there are beginning to thrash about. Goodness me! If I don't wish I had n't started out this morning!"

Yes, surely the wind was coming; we heard it roaring behind there among the trees and hills. Forgetting the stones and the steepness, I slapped the lines on the horse's back, at the same instant the pug, who had been greatly inconvenienced by his mistress rising as she had done, rolled

out of the carriage. Of course the horse had to be stopped. The girl scrambled out, caught up her treasure, and scrambled in. Now there was no more delay in the movement of the cloud. The day grew dark, the whole heavens were obscured, the wind burst on us, the thunder crashed, the lightning blinded. Lion began to bark as fast and as loud as his strength would permit. The horse took the control of himself into his own direction, and began to trot and gallop and flounder on as best he might, the carriage wobbling and bouncing along behind him. Two long minutes of this, and then the rain began to fall, the first drops sounding large and heavy on the leather above our heads. After that the water came in streams. Above the rain and the wind and the thunder, I heard the girl's voice crying shrilly :

"I declare, I don't believe we can tell in such a row as this whether we are struck or not."

I, for one, very soon knew that I was wet. The water slanted in at the back where the curtain was rolled up, and in one minute I was soaked and dripping, and so were we all. Lion kept up his barking, and seemed furious with rage rather than fright. His round, fat body was so wet it looked as if it had been dipped in a tub. For a moment, well as I like dogs, I was tempted to throttle him, for his noise seemed the one sound that was positively unendurable. The lightning flashed constantly, and the concussions of thunder were deafening.

Perhaps we had not been in this confusion more than five minutes before, turning a corner in the road, we saw close to us a large house with a wide stoop in front, and on this

stoop, sheltered from the rain, stood a man in his shirt-sleeves, his brown over-alls tucked into rubber-boots. The place and the man seemed part of a blurred picture in this storm. Seeing us, he stepped forward as far as he could, waved his arms frantically round towards the corner of the house, and shouted what we guessed in the hurly-burly to be these words:

"Drive right round into the barn!"

At any rate we drove in at the open gate, and up a lane, at the end of which we found a barn with its big doors open at both ends, the wind sweeping through it madly.

Once in this shelter, we were silent for a moment, listening to the noise abroad. Even the dog stopped barking, and jumped down to the floor to shake himself. We all followed Lion's example so far as the alighting, but our rehabilitation would be more than a matter of shaking.

Instead of being grateful, we naturally began to grumble that we could not have reached here just two or three minutes sooner.

"They 'll have to keep us over night, out of common humanity," said my friend, "and if they don't give us dry clothes very soon, they will be obliged also to nurse us through fevers."

"How provoking of them not to live a little further up the hill," exclaimed the girl, whose linen dress clung to her and who was beginning to shiver in the wind that sucked through the barn.

It was not a quarter of an hour before the sun was shining as hotly as ever. But it had been a bad quarter of an hour for us. As soon as the drops began to fall less heavily, a figure with a waterproof huddled about it appeared at one of the wide doors. It was a girl not far from the

age of our companion. She informed us that ma had sent her out to tell us to come right in, for we must be soaked to the skin. We could put on some of their clothes while ours were drying, and pa would put out the horse.

I am convinced that it is only heroines who look picturesque in garments furnished them in such predicaments as the one from which we were suffering at this time. In point of fact, we were but travesties of the civilized woman when we appeared on the stoop, after having availed ourselves of the kindness of the two women who lived here, each of whom was of great weight. But we were thankful. We saw our own sodden clothes swinging on a line, and drying rapidly. The tempest had not cleared the air in the least, but our friends predicted a clearer day to-morrow.

We sat nearly all the afternoon on the piazza, and watched the clouds changing over the hills opposite. Occasionally it rained, but not so hard as when we were driving down the road. We had been promised lodging for the night, if we would take "jest what they had." We were only too grateful to take jest what they had. The farmer promised to carry home the waif we had brought with us as soon as his chores were done after supper.

"In the meantime," said the girl, with a grin of something like amusement at the misery she was causing, —"in the meantime, won't my Aunt Eunice be in a wax about me! I only hope she won't take a notion to stop my going out by myself."

It transpired that she came out from New York City early every spring and stayed until late autumn with an aunt who lived six miles

away. She said she used to be sickly, but she considered herself very far from being an invalid at present.

After supper, which was eaten in an immense kitchen that ran the whole length of the rear of the house, we all wandered to the barn again. Our host announced that he considered the weather settled now. The sky was washed until the hot look was gone from it; the sun was setting, and there was that faint, apple-green tint in the horizon which has such a cool aspect.

The man was "hitching up" to a small, old-fashioned open wagon to take home the girl, when a gray horse dashed into the yard, drawing a light trotting cart, from which descended a very young man wearing a high, pearl-gray derby hat and wide trousers, and possessing the general appearance of bestowing a great deal of

time on his toilet, and of being extremely well satisfied with the general effect of his work.

"I 'm looking after my sister," he began. "You see, I came up this afternoon, and there 's been no end of a row about her, and I—"

"You 'd better advertise, Jim," said our waif, stepping from behind a farm-cart, holding the pug in her arms.

She had on a dress which trailed a good deal, and her movements were somewhat impeded. She wore no hat, and her appearance was greatly in contrast to that of her relative.

"By Jove!" said the young man. "So there you are, sis. Jump in and we 'll spin back. But where in thunder did you get such a rig as that!"

"Now, James," said sis, "you just try to make your behavior in accordance with your pantaloons, and

you 'll be too sweet for any thing. I 'll go in and see if my own frock is dry."

When the girl came out in her own clothes, she walked to us and thanked us warmly; she took leave of us all with a winning grace that somewhat surprised us. She put Lion carefully on the seat first, and then sprang in after him. When they had reached the turn in the road, she looked back and waved her big hat at us. I had not expected to feel a slight flatness after her departure, but such was the case. There had been a sparkle in her which now made us aware that the effervescence was gone.

We were glad to go to bed early, and did not care for the sombre bareness of our room, or even for the buzzing of a few mosquitoes about us.

The farmer's prophecy had been

correct. The next day was a perfect day for travel such as ours: the roads were no longer dusty, the air was almost crisp when we made our early start. The horse was brisk and we were brisk ourselves. Every hill had for us to-day an attraction a hundred times greater than it had yesterday. Again we changed our minds, and said we did not care if we did not reach Pittsfield until the morrow.

I write this in a small house not far from the Shaker village in Lebanon. Not two miles away is the fashion that flits yearly to New Lebanon Springs. We see the glittering carriages with their languid occupants going by toward the Shaker settlement. It seems to be a source of great interest for the society belle to visit these drab houses and see the placid-faced women here, who look as if they had never had a past,

and only knew a mild peace in the present, without any expectations for the future. Is it the contrast that interests the belle? In some moods she must almost envy this life, which yet is not life.

We fastened our horse in front of one of the big barns, and wandered about over its vast floor, inhaling its pleasant odors. We went into one of the houses, and such is the calmness, and the attraction of spotless cleanliness, that for a moment we could almost understand what holds the community together. But it is fast dwindling. I hear there are not twoscore in all here now. Perhaps these people are pining for the strong, penetrating enthusiasm of another Mother Ann. She worked miracles, they say; she scoffed at matrimony; she told them, "I am Ann, the Word," and they believed her.

A grave, benignant-looking man instructed us in some things about the sect, and we were ashamed to be found so ignorant. I suppose everybody, save ourselves, knows all about the government by the elders, and how a certain four are called the "Holy Lead," and must remain close in the Lebanon Church. This Shaker man gave us his information as if he were telling what any one of sense who took the trouble to look into the subject would readily believe. That night we dreamed of tranquil Shaker faces; and fancied that henceforth drab should be our only wear.

III.

PONTOOSUC—FISHING FOR A BOY.

A SERVANT assiduously assisted us to alight; another took our satchels; and a third jumped into the buggy and whirled it and the horse away into unknown regions. I made a feeble attempt to say to the person who was conducting us that I wished the horse to be well rubbed down and to have four quarts of oats. The man waved his hand, and, in an indulgent tone, assured me that "that would be all right."

From his manner I knew that his mind had never descended to the depths necessary for him to be aware that wheels needed oiling, so I consoled myself by resolving that if we

ever got away from here, I would immediately, in some secluded spot, make my first use of the monkey-wrench and the box of axle-grease. I am compelled to record that I had the weakness to experience a sense of shame as I wondered what the gentlemen, perhaps I should say the lords, of the stable would think of women who were so lost to woman's true position in society as to carry about a wrench and a box of axle-grease. I blushed as I felt that I could never look them (I mean these gentlemen) in the face. I felt something of that sensation which comes to me when I timidly address, over the counter, a bedecked, aggressive "saleslady."

It was Columbia Hall to which we had come for rest and refreshment. We were now experiencing the contrast between the obscure house and the plain ways of the people we had

just left, and this resort, where elegant women and still more elegant men languidly talk and walk and try to kill time. Why do they come out into the nobility and the simplicity of such scenes? Are not heat, and gas, and hot-house flowers more appropriate for inane flirtations? Sitting in a nook of the piazza, we watched the people sauntering about us. The season can hardly be said to begin before July, but the heat has driven people early from the cities this year.

My first sensation was a sort of indignation that those who could not appreciate Nature in such garb as she wears here, should have the privilege, without the power of knowing her. But as I watched, I saw refined and sensitive faces belonging to some of the women, who moved so gracefully up and down the long piazzas; I saw girls with whom I

should say it were an easy matter to fall in love, and some men who were, perhaps, worthy to fall in love. Can I say more? I asked myself seriously if, even with all the inanity, the frippery, and the shallowness of the average women and men of the world, there may not be found as much real appreciation of the scenes they visit, as among the rustics who dwell all the year in the midst of hills. It may be, after all, that one can only decide that it is the birthright of some, be they gentle or simple, to have eyes to see and a heart to love what is beautiful.

Such eyes and such a heart must feast and be happy in such a place as this. The glance cannot rest on a point that is not charming—not grand and awe-inspiring, but charming. The gaze is refreshed and pleased. There is no reaction, such as comes from contemplating towering mountains

and scenes of grandeur. The summer days here might softly glide into each other until one believed that the winter would never come.

The thermal springs of Lebanon are famous as possessing curative properties for the skin and the liver. But, as happens in the vicinity of the majority of springs which have become popular, the medicinal powers are not much thought of, save by a few yellow, middle-aged people whose occupation it is to study their symptoms. Most persons whom we saw looked happily unconscious of livers. But you cannot expect a lovely young girl to be unaware that she has a skin—if it be in danger of tanning.

"I do believe there 's something in these waters, after all," said a magnificent blonde, stopping within our hearing, and speaking to an extremely well-got-up young man, who

was her companion. "Because, don't you know, my complexion has improved so that even papa noticed it to-day."

The gentleman made some inarticulate, prefatory murmur, and then I heard the original remark about the folly of painting the lily. But it is a talent to know how to quote correctly.

"Pshaw!" said the girl, with a laugh, "you need not have felt obliged to say that."

"It was inclination, not obligation, which prompted me," he responded, and then the two walked away, and we shall never know how the conversation terminated.

From New Lebanon Springs to Pittsfield the drive is one long delight. If you travel here, do not expect to drive rapidly. There is only now and then a level stretch, over which you can bowl along. Usually

the journey from one town to another is made up of climbing one hill, stopping on its top to look about, and to say to yourself: "Ah! Surely this is the most charming view we have yet seen"; then of going carefully down the slope, over narrow roads, seeing farms and farm-houses more and more often as you get down into the dale. In this small valley perhaps a river or a brook twists along gayly, and there is a hamlet of a dozen, or a few dozen, houses, with a store and a church, and often some kind of a tavern, or a house where "they put folks up."

It might have been appropriately said of Berkshire that "the roving eye still rests inevitably on her hills, and she still holds up the skirts of the sky," in whatever direction one may look. It may be ultra-fashionable not to set foot within the limits

of this county before fall, but the summer hath charms sufficient to lure many to spend the whole season, and to wait for the autumn beauty of the woods, for in the time of that beauty it is strictly proper to be found here.

We approached Pittsfield about an hour before sunset, having left Columbia Hall in the middle of the afternoon. The town struck us as being one of the most beautiful we have seen. Indeed, how can it be otherwise, in the midst of such surroundings?

When the Indians held this region round about they called it Pontoosuc, but a dozen years after its settlement in 1752 the place was named for William Pitt. Unless the Indian name is peculiarly jaw-breaking, I am always sorry it has been changed. There is little enough of antiquity in this country, and it seems to me

that we can hardly afford to relinquish the words that hint at years running back to we know not where.

From the windows of our room in the hotel we can see glimpses of the Taconic Hills in the west, and when we walked out in the fading red of twilight, there in the east, standing in the full reflection of the crimson sunset, were the Hoosacs.

We wandered about until it was too dark to see aught save the lighted streets. We did not lose the sense that the town immediately gives one, that it stands high, even though it be surrounded by elevations still higher. It is a plateau in the midst of mountains, a lovely place in regard to air and scenery.

The next morning we decided to rest the horse, and so only drove him the short two miles out to Lake Onota. The trouble here is that the number of bewitching drives in dif-

ferent directions is so great as to be embarrassing. If you choose one, have you not missed another still more charming? There is at first a feeling that you cannot take in all, and the sense that you must miss so much is annoying. But soon the mood changes, and you rest simply grateful that fortune gives you so much. Onota Lake is very beautiful. Because we did not go to Pontoosuc Lake, two miles to the north, we were, of course, told that, of all things, we should not have missed Pontoosuc.

The time slipped by magically, and three hours had gone before we thought of leaving Onota, which has shores so picturesque, and with a certain winning quality, that it was hard to leave it. We looked from the place where once Ashley's Fort stood, over the view spread before us. We toiled about here and there

on the shores, having no guide, and finding out for ourselves from what points we could gaze on the loveliest scenes. There is a place on the northerly shore which gives an outlook about which to dream when one is prosaically sitting by one's fireside at a distance from all "views" that are not contemplated in imagination alone. Indeed, it is in such journeys as these that one gathers a thousand and one pictures for that time of which Wordsworth speaks:

> "For oft when on my couch I lie,
> In vacant or in pensive mood,
> They flash upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude."

It is to some part of this lake that the story of the "White Deer of Onota" belongs. At least, that is what a small guide-book tells us, with the air that every one, of course, is familiar with that legend. But we are of the uninstructed few who do

not know the tale, and we are ashamed to ask about it for fear we may be deemed unworthy to have seen Onota at all.

The people at the hotel said that on no account must we leave Pittsfield without driving to Berry Pond, which is in Hancock. They told us tempting stories of its entrancing beauty of shores, where rocks and green sward and sandy beaches and stately trees reflect themselves in the pond. We can imagine it all, and yet we must deny ourselves some of these trips which sound so beguiling.

Just before we left Onota we had an adventure, at least we participated in an adventure which primarily belonged to a young man who had been rowing about in a miserable little boat all the time we were there. Near where we hitched the horse, we had noticed a long fishing-pole, with line attached, leaning against a tree.

The young man, who was very young, in fact, a boy, was very much occupied in watching us what time he was not bailing his boat, which appeared to leak voluminously. Sometimes he fished a little.

By the time we had reached our carriage, the boat was not many rods from shore, near us, and suddenly something appeared to give out still more, and the craft filled with such rapidity that in a moment it was out of sight, leaving the boy floundering and spluttering in the lake.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed my friend, "can't that boy swim?"

He was keeping himself afloat in a fashion, but it was directly evident that he could not swim. Neither could we; and there was nobody else within a hundred miles, to judge from the solitude of the place. This was dreadful. How could we stand here and see him drown? and we

had no idea in which direction to go for help. We looked wildly and helplessly about.

"Try the fish-pole," he gurglingly cried. "I guess you c'n reach me. Give a good fling."

I seized the fish-pole. I could "fire a stone" more like a boy than could my companion, so it seemed fitting that I should do this.

I unwound the line, and did my best to "give a good fling." The second attempt was successful, for the line dropped within reach of the boy's hands, which clutched it securely, and we began to drag him carefully in. A fish-line is strong, fortunately, and our fish was not very heavy, and did not struggle any, neither was the distance great. We landed him. He scrambled up on the shore and shook himself. He did not seem in the least overcome by gratitude. He looked out toward

the pond and said "he did n't know but he was glad that blarsted boat was sunk."

Then he gathered up the pole and line and remarked "that they did n't seem to be hurt; and he guessed he 'd put for home and git some dry things on." He started. Just be before he was out of sight, he turned and shouted:

"I 'm much obleeged to ye!" Then he was gone. We also started and drove slowly back to Pittsfield, not feeling in the least as I had fancied I should feel if I were ever the means of saving a precious human life.

IV.

A GLIMPSE OF LENOX.

I AM sorry that enthusiasm has gone out of fashion. When I am in close converse with such surroundings as one finds in Berkshire, I am particularly sorry that it is no longer the thing to allow within your heart that sudden and intoxicating effervescence which beauty of any kind used to awaken in men and women who were in any degree sensitive. If you feel that emotion, do not allow it any expression, lest some one shall think that it is "gush," and, in truth, one does hate to be thought gushing; most people could better bear to be considered stolid. For me, however, there is one con-

clusion from which I always draw comfort, and that is that no one except an idiot would ever mistake real enthusiasm of any kind for that sentimental effusiveness which the loveliest lips can hardly save from being nauseating. You perceive that I am leaving open a way which will allow me the manifestation of a little enthusiasm now and then. Put yourself in my place, consider that you are going at your own will, here and there, among some of the most delightful spots in America—not among the grandest places, for you are not now to recall Colorado or Mexico; but did you ever take a journey which was more thoroughly charming than this? That the sense of awe is entirely absent is even something in favor of one who is tired, and who wishes only to be pleased. You are not now to feel a *grande passion.* You are to be

delighted, entertained, captivated; your fancy is to be touched just enough to keep you thoroughly interested every moment. If you are English, and hesitate about expressing too much pleasure among these scenes, you may recall that Lord Coleridge said that "England has nothing more pleasingly picturesque than Berkshire." This saying is a great comfort.

It was with thoughts like these I have just written that we started from Pittsfield that morning towards Lenox, which town lies some six miles to the south. You cannot get away from hills here, for the chain runs north and south along the whole country. But every little mountain is different from all the others. We were so long among them that we saw every contour, and knew how one differed from its neighbor. Some of the valleys lie

hollowed like a cup; some stretch out widely and hold fine farms and pretty villages; and as you wind down a mountain road you will see somewhere among the greenery the gleam of a pond. Frederika Bremer said that the country here is "inspired with wood-covered hills and the prettiest little lakes." She must have been inspired to choose that word, for it is singularly happy and appropriate.

Our horse climbed slowly along the road which leads up the hill on which the most picturesque part of the town is situated. Certainly fashion chose well when it chose to come here and build villas and surround itself with luxuries. But having once come, how can it leave; or rather, how can it wait until so late in the season before flying to a spot which to us birds of passage seemed attractive enough to hold power over

even a jaded mind and body from June until November? The air is clearly sweet, making breathing a conscious delight. But why should I make a futile attempt to describe Lenox? It is an earthly loveliness, sitting among mountains, and waiting to bless those who may come to her. It was our misfortune that having once come we could not stay. We could only stand on that hill-top and gaze and gaze for a happy half-hour. It is no wonder that Fanny Kemble thought that if she lay there after death, she should still wish to lift her head and "look out upon this glorious scene."

There was something of an air of furbishing and getting ready on the hill; somebody had already come, but not yet is the time. Lenox may wait, comparatively deserted, in all her ineffable beauty, until the glory of a later season is upon her before

her devotees arrive in power. If your gown, *ma belle*, was not precisely what you had expected it to be by the gray shores of Newport, it may be absolutely ideal up here among the autumn gorgeousness of the hills. If she said "No," to you in Newport, dear, golden youth, and you remember her all the intervening weeks, she may say "Yes" to you in Lenox. And a yes said in Lenox must be a very precious thing indeed.

Our day was wearing on. The sun dips early behind these hills. We made a start to retrace our steps down the hill on which the village stands, going slowly past villas and grounds, catching glimpses of views here and there which flashed upon our eyes in the late splendor of the day's sunlight. Almost down this road we heard a sound as of something unusual approaching at a rate greater than that generally travelled

in climbing a hill. At another turn we met a four-in-hand taking the ascent bravely, the big horses throwing their feet up and holding their heads high. There were a dozen men on the top; of course nobody was inside, for those seats go for nothing. A Tantivy may be seen often enough here in the fall perhaps, but one does not expect them now. However, if I owned one of these coaches and the horses to go with it, I would certainly invite a party of friends to drive with me up from New York in the early summer.

The turn-out thundered on by us; the man who held the ribbons knowing how to make each horse do his duty, and that is knowing a great deal, for even with an humble pair there is always one animal more inclined to shirk than is the other. I do not know how much champagne there was in that big coach-boot, but

the young fellows on top hardly needed any of it to make them gayer than they were as they went on their journey.

I think we were rather melancholy as we drove back to Pittsfield in the sunset. It is a joy to see a lovely scene, but it is a sorrow to leave it, and we even fancied that we were depressed by the change in the atmosphere from the village on the hill to the commonplace air of lower altitudes. There comes a time, even among the hills of western Massachusetts, when lassitude and indifference follow enjoyment, We went on at a jog-trot over the road which had so interested us in the morning, and which was as full of interest now, had we not been so fatigued. Sometimes the way was in a bright sunlight, and then in the deep shade of some intervening elevation. It was in the shadow of one of these hills

that we saw a procession coming down a cart path which seemed to lead to a house on the slope above. The house was in the full glare of light, and was an old brown, low-browed dwelling that might well enough have stood there since 1750. There were elm trees about it, but they stood so much higher that their limbs drooped down above the chimney. One of them had been riven right down through the middle by a stroke of lightning, and had been let to continue its struggle for life ever since. That one tree ruin gave an air of desolation to the whole surroundings, though the cultivated lands down the slope into the valley were covered with luxuriantly growing crops. At one place there was a man ploughing between corn, and we caught the damp, peculiar odor of the turned-up earth. The procession of which I have

spoken was almost at the road. We stopped that we might look more closely. There were five children, plainly of one family, with their home at the old house up there. The eldest must have been about fourteen, a girl, who was at the head. Directly behind her were two boys of ten or eleven, who evidently were twins. They dragged a small cart made of a box, with solid round wood for wheels. On this cart lay stiff and stark the body of a small white kitten on a bed of wild roses, clover, and daisies. Behind this cart, in single file, came two small girls, one a head taller than the other, the smaller one bringing up the rear. This smallest child was still crying and sobbing violently into her apron. All the others looked as if they had cried a great deal, but were now too much impressed with the solemn dignity of the occasion to

weep. A few yards behind the toddling baby walked a dog, looking very disconsolate and somewhat bored, but as if he could not desert his friends in their grief. Still he could not appear to grieve too much for a mere cat.

When the girl at the head saw us, she stopped involuntarily, and all the rest came to a stand-still, including the dog, who pricked up his ears and gave a short bark, as if glad of any interruption. He was a common-looking yellow dog, but he had a bright face. The baby ahead of him took her apron from her face and stopped her sobs as she stared at us.

We wished very much to join these ceremonies, but how could we intrude?

"Let us follow," said my friend, leaning out of the carriage, and speaking at her gentlest. "We will

not come too near. We also love kittens and dogs."

The girl nodded, and the funeral cortége moved on ahead of us. I fear this addition to the train was a complication to the ceremonies that was not relished by the leader, but she was too polite or too timid to say so.

They stopped at a small, smooth grass-plat by a bit of a brook that ran down from the hill at the left. This place was close by the road, and in the middle of it we saw that a tiny grave had been dug, by the twins, we thought. We paused at some distance, too far to hear if any words were said. We saw the body of the kitten put in the grave, then all the flowers were heaped on her. After that, each of the mourners took up a handful of gravel and threw in. When the eldest girl led up the baby to throw in her handful,

the baby was crying so that her hand had to be guided.

The dog sat on his haunches a short distance away. The dazzling sunlight came through a gap in the hills and covered the group.

The twins began to shovel in the earth with two small, old-fashioned fire-shovels.

In a few minutes we drove on, until we came just opposite the place. We beckoned to the girl, who came up to us, looking very sober; she had the small one by the hand.

"It was very good of you to let us stay," said my companion, in that particular tone of hers which comes from the heart, and therefore goes to the heart. "Perhaps you can get the baby something with this."

The girl's eyes filled with tears. She hesitated.

"We did n't want any money,"

she said, looking at the silver extended toward her.

"I know it. But it is pleasant to give you this," was the response.

Then we drove on more swiftly to Pittsfield for the night.

For some reason, when I grew drowsy in sleep that evening, my incoherent thoughts, instead of dwelling on the beauties of hill and valley which I had seen that day, hovered persistently about those children.

V.

A HOT BOX.

WE left Pittsfield very early in the morning, so early that the waiter who gave us our breakfast at the hotel was extremely surly, and yawned so that he was at great risk of falling headlong into our coffee and beefsteak. The extremeness of the hour had its effect on us also, for we could not eat, knowing all the time how fiercely hungry we should be in two hours' time.

The horse came round with a spear of hay still hanging from his mouth, as if in silent attestation that he had not finished his meal. The matutinal moroseness was so strongly upon everybody that I hardly dared put

my usual question upon starting, "Have the wheels been oiled?" But I did ask it, and was answered scornfully, "Oh, yes, ma'am." This was the regular reply to my regular interrogation. We never really believed it, and yet neither of us ever acted upon our disbelief. We would converse exhaustively upon the subject, and always end, after expressing entire incredulity, by saying, "Well, he said they had been oiled." Thus people will stifle the cries of conscience.

It is five o'clock when we drive by one of the church clocks in Pittsfield. We have that feeling of rectitude which is the reward of early risers. We looked with pity upon the still-closed blinds of the houses. We talked of the benefits of early rising; still I think that, deep in our hearts, we did not begin to feel really capable of enjoying any thing for some time.

But there was enough to enjoy. We were going towards South Mountain, hoping to be able to ascend it for the sake of the prospect, and then in the afternoon to go on towards Worthington, and reach Chesterfield for the night if possible. A horse may safely average thirty miles a day, and our horse had had a very easy time of it thus far. We felt that, in this long day, we might safely ask forty miles of him, or more, if he had a good nooning.

It was in the middle of a lonely road, and precisely ten minutes after six by my watch, that I first heard a slight squeaking sound. I did not speak of it, but said resolutely to myself: "It is the whiffletree." I knew that this part of a carriage may make itself unpleasant in this way, and still not mean any thing serious. Five minutes later my friend said that she noticed a squeak,

but that it must be the whiffletree. I agreed with her. The horse was walking slowly up an incline. The sound continued, sometimes louder, sometimes more subdued. Silent anxiety increased on our part. Finally I said:

"Do you think we are going to have a hot box?"

"That was just what I was about to ask you," was the response.

We kept on going up the hill. Human nature needs just so much warning before it will take heed. Finally I asked, meditatively: "Do you suppose that a hot box in a buggy is as powerful a retarder as it is on a train of steam cars?"

"I was about to ask you the same question," said my companion. Then I pulled up the lines—I was taking my turn at driving—and said austerely that I did not think levity was called for by such a question. I

added, with more indignation still, that it would be a solemn thing to be delayed indefinitely near South Mountain, for, although we had a copious luncheon for ourselves and the horse, we had no tent and no bedding, and I did not know how long a hot box was capable of lasting in a buggy occupied by women. When I ceased speaking, my friend said she thought it was a good time to try the monkey-wrench and the wheel-grease, for it was her belief that there had not been a drop of oil put on that carriage since we left Catskill. But even so, I did not see why our wheels should become so vocal as this. We were now out of the buggy, and had to decide which wheel it was that needed attention. I was of the opinion that it was the off hind wheel, my friend feeling positive that it was the nigh front one. I am sure that we both felt a

slight pleasure in being able to use these terms so glibly. This pleasure was our only compensation for the delay. To decide matters more satisfactorily I led the horse along a few rods, while my friend walked first upon one side of the carriage, and then upon the other, her ear inclined and listening. She decided that I was right, that it was the off hind wheel. Now we conducted the horse as far as possible up among the bushes at one side of the road, and took him from the shafts lest he might start on with only three wheels to the carriage. We hitched him by tying seven or eight knots in his hitch-rope lashed about a small maple. The simplicity of a "horse-knot" we could not then achieve. Then we brought forth the monkey-wrench and placed it on the nut of the wheel. This process is really so very plain that even any one belong-

ing to that class called by the law "idiots and women" can accomplish it. Therefore we succeeded. We, or rather my friend, for I stood by ready with advice, tightened up the wrench and gave it a twist—in the wrong direction, for the nut tightened instead of loosening. But the next attempt began the unscrewing of the nut, which was soon removed. I stepped forward to pull the wheel off, but it would not stir, fortunately, which gave us time to perceive that if I had succeeded in my attempt the buggy would have dropped on that side to the ground, to its probable disarrangement.

"What we seem to want is a carriage-jack," said the person who still held the wrench in her hand.

"But a carriage-jack," I replied, "is not usually put in the luggage of two travelling women. However, hereafter I shall always say to my

friends, 'Never leave home without a carriage-jack.' Let us look for a stick."

We went into the woods by the roadside. After some time we found a piece of oak, very heavy and considerably too long, but we worked until we got it in place, one lifting one side of the carriage while the other quickly thrust the wood under the axle, near the wheel, which, to our alarm, we found would not turn round now. With lips as pallid as if we had been heroines, we asked ourselves how hot that box had become. Were the metals welded together? Must we go back to Pittsfield after a blacksmith?

We took turns at struggling to start the wheel, and when despair was fast settling down upon us, it yielded and came off. There was not a bit of oil to be seen; the iron —or is it steel?—was dry, with spots

of rust, and so warm that it was not pleasant to put our fingers on it.

"First clean the spindle thoroughly, using an old piece of woollen cloth and a little kerosene oil," said I.

Strange to say, we had not brought a can of kerosene. I particularly mention these oversights, that women who contemplate a driving trip may profit by our sufferings.

We naturally omitted the cleaning. With scant elaboration we daubed on some of the patent axle-grease, putting some on our gowns at the same time. Then we lifted back the wheel and pushed it on, finding to our confusion that the nut was not nearly large enough for the large orifice that now gaped before us. What did this mean? What had we done?

We walked round the carriage examining keenly. We found out that we had put the wheel on wrong side

out, so to speak. It did not take us long to change it, and to fasten the nut on again, when we saw, to our delight, that the wheel revolved "just as well as if a man had done it," we said triumphantly. We replaced the horse in the shafts and started on, having a sense of victory diffused through our souls such as I cannot describe. For some time we talked of nothing but the incompetency of some women when placed where unusual work was demanded of them; we pitied the poor creatures a little, and despised them a good deal.

Later, when, on foot, we had reached the top of the mountain, we forgot our self-gratulations and stood silent, warm, weary, but happy. It is worth much to be able to feast the eye and the heart as they may be feasted in this place. Close to us towards the north, Pittsfield

sits upon its plateau ; and near it, a spirit of very beauty, Onota Lake glitters in the sunshine, calling back the glance again and again to its radiance. To the northward, also, grim Greylock rises, and over on the west are Perry's Peak and Mount Osceola. We looked at these until our eyes were half blinded by the persistence of our eager gaze. We had yet to see Lenox Mountain somewhat to the south, and the mountains of Washington. These elevations rose just far enough away to appeal deeply to the sight as well as to the imagination. How green the valleys were ! What deliciousness in the dusky stretches of new growth of wood along hill slopes that had been cut over a few years ago ! The hues in such places were more tender and delicate than in the old forests, and contrasted with the great trees.

Apparently close to us was the Lilly Bowl, holding its sheet of shining water up to the morning sun. The name of this lake seemed to me to be spelled wrongly, until I learned that, unfortunately, it did not refer to the flower, but to an old witch who, in romantic times, lived alone in this valley and ranged over the hills in the vicinity. The dale is even now sometimes called Lilly Ope, a combination of words that ought to please the sentimental tourist; I confess that Lilly Ope sounds agreeably to me. I would have been glad to see a big, gaunt figure start into life down by the still shores of that pond. I even thought I should have been thankful for a wild Indian, if he did not see us; and there, of all places, was the spot for a group of deer to come and drink. But we did not spoil this vision of beauty by longing for

Indians and deer. We longed for nothing. For the time it was beatitude to move slowly about on South Mountain and gaze long in any direction, thinking each time that the scene looked on last was the fairest and loveliest of all. Beyond and all about us were other hills, looming here and there, thrown up indiscriminately, as irreproachable backgrounds to the more intimate beauty among which we stood. Walking this way and that, we sometimes caught sight of a rich intervale where were prosperous farms, for the Housatonic River runs through a country that makes it possible for men to live by farming.

But we must come down from this mount of the beautiful and go on our way to Hinsdale. We went as slowly down the mountain as we had come up. Often we stopped to gaze and to exclaim, and then to sit si-

lent. It seemed to be eight or ten miles to Hinsdale; perhaps it is not really so far. We went through the lower part of Dalton, but saw none of its paper mills. The way now grew rougher and more wild. If it had not been for the bright sun and unclouded sky, I could almost have thought that the country was getting desolate. The houses were very far apart; the signs of cultivation were few.

The mountains in Hinsdale have withdrawn somewhat from the village, but yonder in Peru they loom up again grandly. We are going through Peru, for my friend has a friend there, and we mean to call; only to call, however, for we have resolved to be so free in this journey that we will not stay save at hotels.

The roads grow more narrow and rough, and I could have said craggy, they pitch about so. We were a

great while going the four miles from Hinsdale. The way was so long, apparently, that we began to believe we did not take the right road, and I am still inclined to that belief. We passed tipsy guide-boards directing us on the left to Cummington and Plainfield, the highways running that way looking not much wider than paths. Our buggy, which was wider than the carriages used up here, ran over beyond the wheel rut on one side, making the work of the horse still harder, and causing us to wonder if we could avoid a collision if we met any one. It was rarely that we did meet any other traveller, and then it was a farmer in a long, narrow cart, driving a big hay-fed horse, which he would turn far into the bushes to allow us to pass, he staring hard all the time.

Finally we came within sight of the village of Peru; it is a true

mountain town, with a most distracting view ready for your eyes whichever way you turn; a place to love violently through a whole summer, and to remember tenderly all of the following winter. I suggested to my friend that it might be well, if her friend should be hospitably inclined, for us to remain here the rest of the day and through the night.

"No," was the decided reply, "Hitty Jane is one of the best of women; but she would talk us to death long before morning, and she would describe each view until we should hate her and the view; and I wish not to hate any thing while this journey lasts."

When we drove up to Hitty Jane's house, which was pointed out as not far from the post-office, we were greeted in the most voluble and effusive manner. We must instantly have our horse taken out and fed;

we must come right in and be fed ourselves; we must certainly stay over a few days and be taken to this place and that. "She would not take no for an answer." This remark she repeated a great many times as she forcibly removed my companion's hat and began to unbutton her ulster. My heart sank. This deluge of talk would soon make me addle-headed. I feared my friend would not have sufficient strength of mind to resist. But she did. At last Hitty Jane was made to know that we must be in Worthington that night without fail. We had meant to reach Chesterfield, but we had dawdled so, etc., etc. Hitty Jane really took in the fact that we would not stop. She brewed us coffee, and she placed toothsome things before us She was so kind that I felt I could not have her talk so much. She never stopped talking an in-

stant. If she asked a question, she never waited for the answer; she made many inquiries about our journey; but I soon saw for myself that it was folly to attempt reply.

She did seem to learn from us, however, that we were going to Worthington, for, as we were preparing to leave, she suddenly said:

"If you are going right to Worthington village, perhaps you 'll do me a favor?"

We protested our willingness, and she went on to explain that she had promished her cousin Emily, resident in Worthington, that she would give her one of their Newfoundland pups the first chance she had to send it over. Now, if we would take one, she would be more obliged than she could tell.

The Newfoundland puppy was brought forward; he proved to be about three months old, very bulky,

and blundering, and good-natured, seeming to have seven or eight large paws to sprawl about with, and having an unquenchable desire to lick your face constantly. We had a rope put around his neck and placed him in the front of the buggy. We were told that he knew nothing about following, and we must not let him out of the carriage for a moment. We started, and it seemed as if we had an elephant with us. Besides, we soon became aware that travel made the dog sick. Within a mile of Peru we had to stop and alight to permit him to recover, which he did with lightning rapidity, and, fortunately, the recovery appeared to be permanent, and then he curled down and went to sleep.

In two miles more it occurred to my friend that she had not been told where she was to deliver the dog. It was to go to "Cousin Emily";

all other instructions had been neglected. Nothing was known to either of us of any of Hitty Jane's relatives in Worthington.

VI.

HITTY JANE'S COUSIN EMILY'S DOG.

WHAT kind of a place is Worthington? It may be almost any thing. Even at a few hours' distance from it, I had no distinct remembrance concerning what it is like. It was on our arrival at this place that we had the puppy which we had promised to deliver without knowing to whom to deliver it.

We did not turn back to Peru, because we kept saying to each other that somebody would be able to tell us at our destination where Hitty Jane's cousin Emily lived. It was a small place, of course, and every person would know every other person and all the relatives. Thus we com-

forted ourselves and drove on, the dog sleeping calmly. We were very thankful that he slept, for when he was awake he had been either sea-sick from the motion of the carriage, or so violently playful that it was with difficulty we could remain in the same buggy with him. Occasionally, as we went over the hills, I would essay to look about me, but my mind was not in my eyes; my mind was conjecturing every thing possible about Cousin Emily.

We entered the main street of Worthington shortly before sunset. Our first duty, we had decided, was to drive directly to the post-office and make what inquiries were possible. It was not easy to make these questions very lucid. My friend disappeared from view within the building, and after a short absence returned, looking frustrated. "There 's a woman in there," she said. "I

asked her if she knew Mrs. B. of Peru. She replied that she did not, but she knew Mrs. J. of Hinsdale; and before I could say any thing more, she explained very kindly that if Mrs. B. lived in Peru, her letters would naturally go there, instead of coming here. I tried to say that I did not call to ask any thing about letters, but that I had a young Newfoundland dog——. At this point she shuddered and said she was awfully afraid of dogs, because she had been bitten by one when she was a child; and she was sorry, but none of them would wish to buy a dog to-day. Then she began to stamp letters, with her back toward me, and I came out. Now, do you think every one will think I am peddling dogs? You see, after they say they don't know Mrs. B. of Peru, it is of no use to inquire if they know her cousin Emily. What do you think we had better do?"

I proposed that we should now drive to the hotel, restore ourselves by supper, and then walk out through the village, leading the dog and making inquiries. "But perhaps," I concluded, hopefully, "perhaps they will know at the hotel; anyway, there is always the alternative of going back to Peru and Hitty Jane to-morrow."

"I will not retreat," was the reply, as the speaker climbed into the buggy as well as she could over the puppy.

We went to the Waverley House. We saw the dog tied securely to a post near the stable, and then we had our supper, and revived ourselves by a short rest in our room, which overlooked the place where the dog was fastened. He saw us and writhed and whined incessantly. When we had sufficiently reposed, we went down stairs and had a private interview with the landlord. But the in-

terview amounted to nothing, for he was not acquainted in Peru at all, consequently did not know Mrs. B. We carried, with our own hands, a bowl of bread and milk to the puppy, and when he had eaten it we led him forth, frisking clumsily. We did not feel in the least like frisking.

We said the only way to make sure that we had not missed the right place was to stop at every house. I felt that I ought to aid my friend, and so I sacrificed myself, and said that I would go on one side of the street, and she on the other. Not until we found some one who knew Mrs. B. of Peru were we to tell any more of our story. I don't know what form my companion adopted, but I adhered strictly to the fewest words that would ask the question, and I did not apologize or say that I was not insane. Why

should they believe any such statement of mine?

When I had made this inquiry five times I found that it was wearing work. I began to wish that I had something to sell, so that I might, in the midst of other conversation, tell that Mrs. B. of Peru had bought largely of me, and then casually ask if they knew Mrs. B. I felt that if this thing continued an hour longer, I should go to a shop and buy a stock of pins and needles to retail. I must have something to break the deadly monotony. When I had asked the question for the third time I knew exactly how each face would look, and I dreaded to see that look; it was a combination of curiosity, surprise, and a little alarm lest I might be violently crazy and pull a knife or a pistol from my skirts. I began to have diabolical inclinations; I wished that I had

a revolver to display; the women should not look at me like that for nothing.

As I walked away from the fifth house I saw my fellow-sufferer a goodly distance ahead of me, for the houses were not so many on her side of the street. At the same time a farmer in one of the narrow, box-like wagons of the country came driving deliberately by me. I have always believed that, at this moment of my life I was inspired. Why not ask this man? Acting upon this impulse, I stepped forward and held up my hand to hail him. In response to my signal he pulled in his horse and gazed. Then followed this conversation:

"Do you know Mrs. B. of Peru?" I inquire, my lips almost stiffening as I pronounce the words, and at the same instant become aware that the woman of whom I have just asked

the question in the house behind me is standing in the open door-way, and has heard me again. Without seeing her, I know that she looks frightened, but is held spell-bound to the spot. I do not think that she yet knows that there are two women who are going through the town uttering the same interrogation. I wish I could overhear the talk among these people an hour later.

The farmer whom I had addressed proved to be somewhat deaf. He leaned far over from the seat and said: "What say?"

I repeated my demand of him.

"Mrs. B.," he said. "Ye don't mean Hitty Jane, do ye?"

I think I must have clasped my hands in ecstasy when I heard him reply.

"Yes, I do mean Hitty Jane," I answered. "Do you know Hitty Jane's cousin Emily?"

He laughed broadly. "I guess I know Emily ruther well," he answered, "for I happen to be her father. Any news from Hitty?"

I wanted to shed hysterical tears. Instead of weeping, however, I begged leave to get into the wagon, saying that we must immediately overtake a friend of mine; that we had a Newfoundland puppy that Mrs. B. had sent; jumbling up my words so that the man did not understand for some time. All the while I knew that that woman was listening at the door.

At last we reached my friend, who was leading the puppy. As soon as she saw me I began to gesticulate wildly at her. She came rapidly towards me. She told me afterwards that she supposed this business had turned my brain, and that my frantic movements were the first symptoms of insanity.

It may be better not to attempt to portray our joy and relief when we saw the puppy in the wagon behind Cousin Emily's father. It appeared to me that we had had that puppy with us for months. We declined the man's very cordial invitation to spend the night at his house, which was only a short distance out of the village. It seems that we had passed his farm on our way from Peru.

We went back to the hotel. Before the daylight was really gone from the tops of the hills about the town we were asleep, our minds free from care.

We had no inclination to stay in Worthington a moment after our breakfast the next morning, and started immediately for Chesterfield. When our carriage was brought round, the hostler said "that there wa'n't no washers on one of them wheels," pointing to the one we had removed the day before.

"Washers?" said we in chorus, looking at the wheel, and not seeing any thing amiss.

"The leather washers that go inside," said he, pitying us. "They make the wheel go a good deal stiddier. Guess you 'll find that wheel 'll wobble a sight. The others are all right."

"You have oiled them, then?" said my friend in grateful surprise.

"Yes, ma'am, allers do."

We gave this hostler a quarter of a dollar for information concerning washers and for alleged oiling.

Thus far we had not passed the night at any place which we had previously selected on the route. But it made no difference otherwise than that one likes occasionally to follow one's plans. We had intended to remain a night at Chesterfield, but as we reached there rather early in the day, coming only from Worthing-

ton, we did not stop at all, save now and then along the road, to look off at the scenes that were everywhere attractive. This is a grazing town, and it is as still, as idyllic in its aspect, as should be a place where cattle roam over the high fields. We had climbed gradually until at last we were on that altitude where the village stands in air that I should think must always be pure. It seemed to be stiller here even than it had been in the towns we had just left. The songs of the birds came more plainly to us, and the soughing murmur of the trees was more audible. At least we thought so. Here would be another spot where the world-weary man might get away from time; a place to hide in and let the days go by unnumbered, while the air and the sky and this delicious spot of earth might bring healing with every moment.

We felt that we were missing a pleasure in not stopping in Chesterfield; still we tried to tell ourselves it would be just as pleasant at Williamsburg. But it was not. We dined there, however, at the Hampshire House.

At dinner my friend suddenly suggested that possibly we "might have telegraphed to Hitty Jane instead." But was there a wire? Judging from the general appearance of those towns, one might say that the telegraph had not yet been heard of.

From Williamsburg we were tempted to try a stage trip to Swift River, or to Goshen, but we resisted the temptation and went on our way to Hatfield. There we should reach the Connecticut River, the fat cattle, and the tobacco fields. At least, so the guide-book told us. Already we have proved that the book was right as far as the river is concerned. I

write this in our room at the Hatfield House. The town has so inviting a look, is so prosperous, lying comfortably on its river intervale, that we feel that we shall not leave early on the morrow.

At supper, a lady sitting opposite us, learning that we had come from Chesterfield, asked if we had picked up any choice specimens there. Thus, with humiliation, we learn too late that Chesterfield has rare minerals, and we may have missed an amethyst or a ruby as a trophy of our journey. But perhaps these gems are not picked up from the highway.

VII.

"ARRER-HEADS?"

SOMEONE has said that "the person who cannot be happy in the Connecticut Valley cannot be happy anywhere."

If it is summer and there is a blue sky over your head, and you are wandering at your own will through this valley, you are not disposed to think this saying extravagant. When you reach this queen river of Massachusetts, there is more placidity in all the views which catch your eyes. The farms are richer, and every thing tells that the struggle with the earth for a maintenance is not such a hard fight here as it is back yonder among the hills nearer the western borders

of the State. No wonder the cattle are fat, living on these rich meadows. It must be a very obdurate cow which would not fatten, feasting all day upon such verdure as stretches mile after mile along these intervales. The sight of the vivid green grass or of the dark earth upturned for tobacco or grain crops is a refreshment to the vision. One has no call to pity any poverty-stricken creature in this part of the country. The air of comfort pervades every thing.

Hatfield is a charming village, and is prosperous with that material prosperity which does not give a hint of the sufferings of the past. Unlike a great many towns hereabouts it has a past, of desperate battles and agonies of anxieties. The little place is now at peace with itself and all the world, and I imagine it is only the visitor who comes as we have come who thinks now of the dreadful days

when the settlers here were roused at any hour by Indian yells. The town was particularly unfortunate. It was "clear grit" that the white men must have had which enabled them to stay here. They might have been pardoned if they had given up every thing and stolen away. To fight a foe like the foe with which they contended was a never-ending war against cunning and cruelty. It was not a hand-to-hand fight, and then an end to it. No sleep, no rest; a constant watch with the finger on the trigger. The very names of these settlements along the valley are like pictures of those old times—Hatfield, Deerfield. Do not you remember, in the old geographies and histories, those illustrations where the women and children were running wildly forth from a house in flames, around which Indians, with tomahawks in their hands,

were waiting to scalp their victims? And somewhere in the background the men were rushing in from the fields too late to protect their families, but not too late to die with them. I recall such pictures, and underneath one of them were the words "Attack on Deerfield."

Can you not see the people, led by their minister, the Rev. John Williams, fighting furiously for all they held dear? And that time they succeeded in driving back the enemy. There is a penetrating pathos in the old tales of these attacks and repulses, a pathos different in its power from the stories of other conflicts. There was "that choice company of young men, the very flower of Essex County," who met such woful disaster at Bloody Brook. Somewhere about here that choice company lie, beneath ground deeply wet with blood. How can we imagine, in this

divine summer air, that day, February the 29th, 1704? "While the watch was sleeping"—fatal sleep!—"and the snow had drifted over the palisades, two hours before daylight, the place was attacked by Major de Rouville, with 340 French and Indians. The walls were easily passed, and a terrible scene of slaughter, pillage, and conflagration ensued."

There was one house, the chronicle goes on to say, that was not burned. Seven men were in it, firing from the loopholes, and their wives were casting bullets. Somebody escaped and ran to Hatfield, for this was in Deerfield. A company from Hatfield started out, but they, too, were defeated by De Rouville. Was it by French or Indians that Mrs. Williams was murdered in Leyden Gorge? It was her daughter, a small child then, who was taken captive,

finally married an Indian, and became in truth an Indian herself.

These are dreadful chronicles to read, but these are some of the things we read in our room at the Hatfield House the night we arrived here. It was in the "good old colony times, when we were under the king," that these things happened. Looking again over these pages which we used to study with such horror when we were children, we wonder why the colonists were not wiped from off the face of North America. Had these people in New England been any thing save hard-headed Puritans they must have succumbed. But who can imagine a Puritan yielding in any way? Three times Hatfield was attacked; a repulse achieved cost the settlers almost as much as a defeat. They could ill afford to spare a single man. The strength of ten must have been in each right arm.

A bright-looking girl waited upon us in our room. She said she was born in the village, so we felt that we might ask her if there were any Indian relics in the town.

"Ma'am?" said she, in interrogative amazement.

"Indian relics," I repeated. "You know, the savages used to attack the place here."

She grinned in embarrassment. "I guess you must be mistaken," she said. "I never heard nothin' about the Indians. Thought there wa'n't none round."

She hurried with her work, anxious to get out of the room.

Was this girl a pupil recently of the famous New England schools? We felt too much deference to her feelings to make that inquiry. Even if she had sat under competent teaching, grammar and history seemed to have rolled off her mind with unusual facility.

In the morning we walked about the village streets and strayed over some of its fields. We still had Indian relics upon our minds, and felt that we should be unfortunate if we could not find even one arrow-head. We went so far as to climb a high fence that we might follow along in the furrow of a man who was ploughing with a pair of oxen that moved, if possible, with more than the average slowness of oxen. Did we not know that it is in ploughing that treasures are turned up to the light? Scores of people, not half so deserving as we felt ourselves to be, had found, in a hundred places in New England, tangible signs of the presence of the Indian here 200 years ago.

The man was far ahead, and we hoped he might not notice us. But it is not in the country that one may reasonably hope that. We looked

eagerly, poking over the earth with sticks. The process was as interesting as hunting for minerals. There was the possibility of making such an important "find."

It was hardly a minute before the farmer had stopped his oxen and stood gazing absorbedly at us. At last he could bear it no longer, and came walking down the furrows towards us. He was so tanned that he was almost of the color of the ground he walked on. He had a fringe of grizzled beard under his chin; a face in which shrewdness and stolidity were curiously blended.

"What ye lost?" he asked, a great curiosity in his voice and manner. We told him what we wished to find, and he stared harder than ever, making a slight movement away from us as if we were demented.

"Arrer-heads?" he said vaguely. "What on earth makes ye look for

arrer-heads here?" He poked the ground with the handle of his whip. "What sort of things be they?"

Did this man walk these historic fields day after day withot knowing that they had been the scenes of fights as heroic as any ever fought? We mentioned the subject of Indians to him. We said that we were strangers, and were interested in the old days of the town.

"Oh, land!" he exclaimed in undisguised scorn. "I believe I have heard there used to be redskins 'bout here, but they ain't of no 'count nowadays. If you find any arrer-heads, you 're welcome to 'em fur 's I 'm concerned."

He walked away to his oxen, which were ruminating with as much intelligence as occupied the mind of their master.

We felt depressed. We almost began to think that there never had

been any Indians here, or that if there had been, it was very singular in us to remember it. We discontinued our search for relics, and went down to the ferry which takes one to North Hadley. Mount Warner rose up close to us, tempting us to climb it. Is there a spot on the Connecticut River as it runs through Massachusetts that is not lovely? It is a stream of winning beauty for many a score of miles. Having crossed and recrossed the river without having landed at Hadley, we drove out that afternoon and went up Horse Mountain, which lies somewhat to the west of the town, and from there we overlooked much of the rich, extensive vale wherein lie many villages—Amherst, Northampton, the Hadleys, and more whose names we did not then know. Sugar-Loaf Mountain, not far away, is said to be the place from which the best

views of the country can be had. Every thing was attractive. Here was the charm of prosperous cultivation everywhere, with the river like a constant benediction. It was a good place in which to sentimentalize, and we had been so balked in the matter of "arrer-heads" that we felt that we needed some consolation in the shape of poetry; thus we fell to quoting, as we gazed from this point and that on the mountain. I wonder why it is that a little reciting of more or less appropriate verses is such a pleasure to the soul at a time like this. It was a satisfaction to me to be able to murmur to myself:

> "I know the shaggy hills about
> The meadows smooth and wide;
> The plains that toward a Southern sky,
> Fenced east and west by mountains, lie."

My friend listened to me with as much interest as one can assume who is waiting to recite a few lines her-

self. Of course one likes one's own quotations best, and she had Wordsworth ready the moment I should cease.

"Oh, what a joy it were, in vigorous health,
To roam at large among unpeopled glens
And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps; regions consecrate
To oldest time!"

Then we began to descend the hill, conscious of an appetite for our supper, and planning a very early start for the morning.

VIII.

A USEFUL BOY.

"IF there is any thing I despise, it is that kind of an animal popularly known as 'a woman's horse.'"

Thus my friend, as we drove away from the Connecticut River at six o'clock of a morning that promised to be scorchingly hot when the sun should be higher. Even now there was a great deal of power in the rays that came level in our faces from the east.

This remark was prompted by the words of the landlord as we stepped into our buggy in front of the Hatfield House. The landlord confided to us the fact that sorrel horses were mighty apt to be unreliable, and

there was a spark in this one's eye that made him doubt if 't was a woman's horse; meaning by this that our steed appeared to have more spirit than a sheep and more speed than an ox. He went on to say that it was going to be a real burner, and when we got to Amherst he advised us to get a sponge, wet it, and fasten it on top of the horse's head, between his ears. We went onward somewhat conscience-smitten. This was the second time we had been told to get a sponge. We did not wait until we reached Amherst, about six miles away. We bought a sponge in Hatfield, and as soon as we were well out of the town we stopped at a spring, saturated the sponge, and essayed to place it on top of the horse's head, exactly between his ears. A great deal of water ran under my sleeves and along my arms, and the sponge fell

into the road and was covered with sand.

"We seem to need a cord, or something," my friend said, rinsing our purchase in the spring.

"Also," I replied, "we need a little of that gift which some one has called 'gumption.'"

There was a white string around a paper bag of lemons on the floor of the buggy. We appropriated this string, and after a great deal of reaching and struggling and dripping of water, we fastened the sponge in the proper place. Then we drove on for half a mile before the sponge escaped from its bandages, and hung bobbing down over the horse's right eye. It was impossible for us to enjoy scenery in this way, and we knew the scenery here was such as should be enjoyed. It was growing hot now so rapidly that, having procured this means of relief for the

horse, we dared not give it up. We stopped again and alighted, still damp from our last attempt. When we were told to do this thing, it seemed a perfectly easy thing to do. Now that I tried to get the sponge off from where it hung, I found it was so secure that the process required a penknife. Such is the depravity of inanimate things. We wondered if there were bridles made with a view towards sponges; if there were, it would be our duty to possess one. So absorbed were we in this second endeavor, that we were quite startled by a voice which asked:

"What ye trying to do now?"

A half-grown boy in blue overalls and shirt was standing behind us, the other side of the wall. He had a covered tin pail in one hand and a fishing-rod over his shoulder. We seemed to amuse him and to excite his pity.

"What should you think we are trying to do?" I asked, crossly.

"I dunno's I could make a guess," he answered, setting down his pail, and leaning his rod on the wall. He put one hand on the top of the wall and jumped over. "Jest let me have a try at it," he said.

We sat down on rocks, panting and perspiring. As we watched this youth, I believe we were both guilty of the sin of envy. With two or three turns he unbuckled the throat-lash, lifted the bridle, placed the sponge under the upper part of it, drew the leather straps carefully down, and then refastened the buckle. There was the sponge looking as if it never would loosen, and in exactly the right spot.

"That is because you are a boy!" cried my friend, while we both gazed in undisguised admiration at our deliverer, who responded by a smile which gradually became a laugh.

"Tain't no great to do," he said.

"No great, perhaps, but enough," I replied fervently. "Name your reward."

There was a something in the boy's face which showed intellect and appreciation. We had learned that to talk as he did was sometimes a sign of carelessness rather than a lack of knowledge. My friend put her hand hesitatingly in her pocket. She was not sure that she ought to offer the boy money. He flushed up beneath his tan, and said quickly:

"Oh, don't give me money. I guess I can do a hand's turn for anybody without a few coppers for it. But I guess I 'll name my reward," glancing at me comically. "Be you goin' Amherst way? Wall, then, it 's so almighty hot, mebbe you 'd let me squeeze into yer buggy till we come to the corner up there. I 'll set right down front." We let him

squeeze into the buggy. Boy fashion, he hung his tin pail on one of the steps, and he rested his fishing-rod over the dash-board. He said there was a particular brook that he had n't tried this year, and if he did n't go there before the thick of the haying, he never should go; that was the amount of it. He meant to stay all day if he was n't eat up by the 'skeeters, and he meant to have a tarnation good fish supper when he got home. He informed us that the tin pail held two kinds of lunch, one kind for him and one for the fishes. His was doughnuts and theirs was worms, and he guessed most likely they was wrigglin' some. At this we shuddered, and asked him if he had the worms in the same pail with the doughnuts.

"Oh Lor', yes," he answered complacently. "Don't do no harm; they have different compartments. They are all right, you bet."

He stooped over and swung his pail up from where it hung, opened it and showed a baking-powder tin-box tightly closed. "That 's where the wrigglin 's goin' on," he said, "Want to see 'em?"

"Oh, no! no!"

"Have a doughnut? They are prime."

We decline, and he rehung his pail, remarking that women were the queerest things in the world.

"They are not half as queer as boys," I said with emphasis.

He did not reply for some time, occupying himself by carefully removing the flies from the horse with his rod. Finally he said:

"Yes, they be, a million times queerer."

"How?"

"Wall, for one thing, there ain't a boy on earth that would have tied a sponge onto a horse's ear. He

might have tied it onto his tail, but not his ear."

"But we did not mean to do that."

"I saw ye a comin'," he went on, "the sponge a bobbin', and the horse naturally as mad as thunder. He 'd 'a' kicked up in another rod. Don't look like a woman's horse, somehow."

"Thank you," said my friend; "that was the one thing we did not intend he should look like."

"I guess you 'll have a smash-up before you get through with him. I s'pose you 're out on a trip for scenery, ain't ye?"

"Yes, we are in pursuit of scenery." The boy's gray eyes wandered over the prospect, and I watched the look of love come in his brown face.

"I don't find no fault with it about here," he said. "I don't think I could get along without hills and

streams and ponds. Wonder how it all looked when the Indians was round."

Upon this we started eagerly on the subject of the redskins. The boy knew all that we knew, and a great deal more. He had devoured every page of all the histories of the early days of the colonies. He grew excited, and was carried a half-mile past his corner. He said he had found seven arrow-heads on his father's farm at different times, when he had been ploughing. If we would tell him how to direct, he would send us one by mail. It was with regret that we parted from him, when he suddenly recollected how far he had been carried. Half-way across a field he turned and waved his tin pail at us. Now will he send the arrow-head? I believe he will.

In half an hour we reached Amherst, an attractive village even with-

out its college. Here we were to spend a few hours of the greatest heat, then start in time to reach Ware at night.

The academic towns of America have a charm peculiarly their own, and Amherst is not an exception. Even to a stranger, who simply drives through its streets and rests a while at its inn, there is something which reveals that there is more refinement here than in those comfortable and somewhat rustic towns through which we have passed. It is an irreproachable spot for a college, a lovely place for the home of a youth's *alma mater*, and one which would linger as a joy in his memory. We passed by the hill on the outskirts of the village, where the college buildings are situated, noting particularly that octagonal, strange-looking structure which has a dome of a vivid blue color, like something

builded beneath a tropical sky, rather than where a New England winter may howl about it. It stands boldly ahead of the other buildings, and immediately draws the eye. We learned that it contains the valuable collections for which Amherst is famous throughout the country. We are instructed that these collections "are only surpassed by those of the British Museum and the Imperial Cabinet at Vienna." We wanted to see the immense ruby that is "two feet high and one foot in diameter," and believed that a a ruby like that could hardly affect us as a jewel, but only as a monstrosity. And what must a sapphire of thirty pounds' weight be?

But how could we stay in the town long enough to gaze upon these things, though we should be given permission so to do? We must harden our hearts, and content our-

selves with walking about the place, if the heat did not destroy us in the act. So we left the horse at the Amherst House, and went out under a big umbrella. We had, however, decided that not all the colleges in the world would tempt us to walk a quarter of a mile, and were turning back to seek inglorious ease at our inn, when, with all the suddenness that is so characteristic of our climate, the wind whisked into the east, a film spread over the sky, and we should have been thankful for the ulsters we had left at the hotel. At the shore this was an "east turn," here it was none the less refreshing. Instead of being languid and without energy, we now felt capable of a five-mile walk. So it came about that we rambled for two hours around the town, giving most of our attention to that part where the college is located, but not entering anywhere.

The Memorial Chapel is a beautiful building, its stone walls and lovely spire rising from the green grass in the midst of which it stands, and commanding a view of the enchanting vale below it. We wished we might go to the top of the college tower, and look out over the scene which must be visible from there. We could imagine the picture waiting to be gazed upon, with the river sweeping away towards the south.

The Agricultural College we did not see, save from a distance; and if we saw any of the "Aggies," we could not distinguish them from other students.

We were told of a great many excursions which it is proper and customary to make from Amherst, but we felt that we had taken up too much time already. Still, the latter part of our journey we expected to be the least interesting, and then we

intended to make our thirty miles a day. So we resolutely turned our backs on trips to Mount Holyoke, and Mounts Tom and Norwottuck. We might have driven up Mount Toby, for there is a carriage road to the top. But we could not go up all the hills, though Paradise might be viewed from them. So, at a little after two, we went forth on the road towards Ware, this time with wraps fastened closely, and with no sponge on the horse's head.

IX.

TRUST NOT A PINE BOUGH.

Dame Nature once, while making land,
Had refuse left of stone and sand;
She viewed it well, then threw it down
Between Coy's Hill and Belchertown,
And said, "You paltry stuff, lie there,
And make a town and call it Ware."

IT was this town that we entered after a long afternoon's drive from Amherst, the wind still cool in our faces from the east. We had been through Belchertown village, being told that we should find better roads than by keeping in a more direct line further to the north, through corners of Pelham and Enfield. We found that one of our New England guide-books calls Pelham a "mountain hamlet." This brief description

made us wish to turn into that road which we passed at our left, where was a guide-board directing to Pelham. Our appetite for mountain hamlets is insatiable, but the time had come when we must cease to gratify it by going from our regular route, which curved now downward towards the northeast corner of the Rhode Island State line. Already we saw before us the end of the journey, which seemed to have lasted far longer than it really had. Very soon now we should not rise in the morning, look at our much-battered map of Massachusetts, and decide what towns we should traverse that day to reach a given point. It had certainly been great fun. Well, it was not over yet, and we would make the most of it as long as it lasted.

Our horse, instead of seeming more weary than when he started,

appeared now to have a premonition that he was getting toward home. He could scent out a railway crossing with even more than his usual keenness, and showed more than ever that he was not "a woman's horse." We were always obliged to exercise a great deal of care when approaching a railway; for, in spite of all discipline, he continued to be afraid of every thing which reminded him of steam-cars. Knowing this weakness, we had been able to manage him very well thus far.

Having taken our room at the Hampshire House, we proceeded to "cram" about Ware, as is our custom when we arrived at a place. Of course we knew it would be far better to read and assimilate every thing about every thing before we start on a trip like this. But our way is easier, and is far less of a strain on the intellectual faculties. Not that

I am recommending this slipshod manner of acquiring information. We found in the book about Ware, which a lady in the hotel loaned us, that this territory was granted to a band of the old soldiers of King Philip's war. I wonder if they congratulated themselves on possessing this charming tract of land on the river which wanders by it, and near the bold hills which make Ware very picturesque. If they did call themselves lucky, that feeling was of very short continuance; for the rhymes at the head of this chapter are really descriptive of the soil. New England is not famous for its rich soil, and "her only mines are ice and stone." But Ware is worse than all the rest. The King Philip veterans were mightily disappointed when they discovered that it was useless to spend their time and strength in trying to work this land. So they

sold it, and they did not get a very good price for it, either: two cents an acre. We did not learn who were the purchasers, nor what they thought of their bargain.

However, the town looks flourishing now, has between four and five thousand inhabitants, and is absorbed in the manufacture of cotton and woollen goods.

When we drove into the village it was six o'clock, and the road was swarming with dingy, ill-looking operatives, who were just through with their day's work. I do not know how it is here, but in most of these factory towns a large proportion of the workers are "Kanucks," and are not of a high grade mentally or morally. In what we call "shoe towns" it is very different; as a class the laborers on boots and shoes are New England people, or Irish who have become much American-

ized. Moreover, it really seems as if the work in mills like these takes from the artisan a certain self-respect. But this may be all a fancy.

Starting from Ware the next morning and going on towards Brookfield, we were again impressed with the fact that our ways were fast losing their picturesqueness, though all the country in central Massachusetts is restful to the eyes. The hills are smoother and lower; the vales less abrupt, and more comfortable and available for the settlements which cover them. The roads are wider, and do not have to wind and twist, to escape climbing rugged mountains. We can drive more rapidly, and are also not impelled to stop at every turn and gaze about us. We shall surely do our thirty miles now, without too much temptation to linger.

Brookfield is a shoe-manufactur-

ing place, and a farming town also. Here again we are on ground made historic by Indian attacks and repulses. Here is where the white settlers gathered in the garrison-house and defended themselves for three horrible days against assaults by shot and flaming arrows. Finally the Indians put bundles of straw and flax against the walls and set fire to them. Then, to the superstitious horror of the savages, there came a violent shower and extinguished the flames. These strangers must be under the protection of the Great Spirit, they said. When the rain was over, a body of horsemen came from Lancaster to the rescue, and the Indians fled. But Brookfield was not lucky in those days. A "military necessity" made the Legislature order the town to be deserted. This was in 1676. For half a score of years or more the terri-

tory was left waste and uninhabited. There is a pond here called Quaboag, which flows into the Chicopee River by the stream named the Sashaway. This is a pleasing memory of Indians who were not pleasing in the flesh.

We dined in Brookfield and rested for a couple of hours. I do not know whether the oats and hay of this place are peculiarly stimulating, but true it is that the horse held his head uncommonly high when he started out, and gave us to understand that if he should really feel a desire to frisk, he should, notwithstanding our efforts, yield to that desire. But we crossed a railway track in safety, though we were twitched over very spitefully, and then taken along for half a mile at a tremendous rate, as if the animal despised himself for having consented to cross.

"If we can only get home without an accident!" cried my friend, as

she clung to the side of the carriage, which bounded along uncomfortably. Then, when our pace was more sedate, she explained that it was n't that she cared particularly about a smashed-up carriage, and wounds, and broken bones, but that then she should hear every one of her acquaintances say " I told you so," and she felt that she could not bear that. For when we had proposed coming down from Catskill in this manner, and had requested this horse and carriage to be sent out to us, we were assailed by a flight of letters, each one picturing the impropriety, the danger, the general insanity of our plan. To all of which we replied briefly that we wanted the turnout sent. In response to this there came another flight of missives representing that the horse was not a woman's horse, and would be sure to do something terrible before we reached

home with it. If we must have a horse at all, it was believed, with singular unanimity by all our friends, that Deacon Langley's horse was exactly the thing we wanted. If we would only consent to have that, they should rest easy. The beast thus referred to was a big mare, with thick legs and an enormous abdomen—an animal which looked at you with stolid eyes, and which had to be lashed persistently if ever you wanted it to go beyond a foot's pace. She was considered perfectly safe, and I think she was.

"It is evident," I said, as we perused these remonstrances in Catskill —"it is evident that people do not wish us to reach home, since they advise Deacon Langley's mare as a means of locomotion. Do they think nothing of the expense of whips, and of nervous and muscular force? And how many nights should we be

at hotels? And think of our tempers!"

I spoke the truth. I had driven our sorrel hundreds of miles; I was acquainted with him. He was nervous, and was afraid of certain things. He was not, like most horses advertised, able to stand in front of a pile-driver unmoved. But he was well built, he had a deep chest, and clean legs, and eyes that were gentle, but which had a hint of fire in them. This animal travelled with an easy swing, and telegraphed through the reins to you that he could hurry if you desired him to do so. This was the horse which everybody said we should not have, and I prided myself on being able to drive full as well as the ordinary man. Indeed, I had frequently had the hardihood to say that I did not see why the mere fact of being a man should constitute a qualification as driver.

"We will not correspond any longer on this subject," said my friend at last. "We have n't the time nor the amiability to do so. We will now send telegrams until we hear that the horse has started."

We did so. This is the despatch that we composed for use until effectual: "Send sorrel and buggy immediately."

We decided that we should wire this, morning and afternoon, until we heard that it had been obeyed. We sent it three times, when we received this message:

"Stop telegraphing. Sorrel and buggy shipped ten minutes ago."

When we read those words we smiled as those smile who conquer. Then we turned amiable and wrote very sweet letters home, assuring every one that in our hands the sorrel was a veritable lamb, and that no human beings had ever been so care-

ful as we should be; also, that if they had forced Deacon Langley's mare upon us, we would have died rather than attempt to drive it home.

All this came back to us when the carriage was reeling behind our steed, which was trotting in that kind of way which sometimes precedes a run. But the road was straight and smooth before us, and, after a little sprint and some gentle words from our lips, and firm pulling from our hands, the sorrel began to subside. Fortunately neither of us is alarmed easily when on the road. Still, there was something in the horse's manner which made us think we should do well to look out for him. We were but a very short time going from Brookfield to Spencer. Elias Howe, of sewing-machine fame, was born in Spencer. This fact seems about all we remember concerning the town. It is probable that we were too much

absorbed with our horse to take much notice, save to perceive that the village looked prosperous. On to Leicester, and still nothing happened; but we continued to feel a sense of thunder in the air as regarded the horse. Leicester is a very attractive town on Strawberry Hill. It was so attractive, and the day was getting so warm, that a short distance from the village, on a lovely bit of sloping ground, shaded by a group of pine trees, we decided to halt, take out the horse, and have a long rest, being sure that we could reach Worcester before dark.

It was at this place that something did happen. When I relate what it was that occurred, I am sure you will agree with us in the belief that the horse used the utmost consideration towards us. It is not every animal that would wait until—but let me tell exactly what took place.

We did no more nor less than what we had done before on this journey, save and except in connection with the newspaper. The horse was quite heated, for he had come rather fast for the greater part of the way. We took off his harness and put the hitch-rope about his neck, fastening the other end of the rope to a branch of pine. Then we sat down near on the fragrant pine needles, doffed our hats, and began to be refreshed by the sweet breeze and by the valley before us. We partook of a few small and very dry cakes, and wished that we had a cool drink to make us forget how poor the cakes had been. When the sorrel had dried somewhat, we brought forth his luncheon. Though we hoped he would be fed in the stable in Worcester, where he would pass the night, we could never know whether hostlers really did as they said they would do. They as-

severated overmuch. We always had a small bag of oats in the back of the buggy. We had also once had an old tin pan, which had served as feeding-box, but this pan had come to irreparable grief the last time we used it, the horse stepping in it, and taking out the bottom of it.

In Brookfield we had bought a copy of *The Evening Post;* we had read it, and there it was lying folded on the seat. Could it be that our after misfortunes were the natural consequences of putting an *Evening Post* to such a use? Certainly we shall never use any copy of that paper for a feed-box again.

This is an appropriate place in which to say when you take the harness from a horse, hitch him in the open air and feed him from a newspaper, it is far better to use a head-stall than a rope about the neck. The rope gives a much

greater sense of freedom to the animal. A little observation will show you this.

There was an indescribable alertness about the sorrel as he stood there. But he was eager for his oats. He had eaten half of them when a breeze whisked up a corner of the paper into his left eye. He snorted and jumped back sharply; as he jumped, the pine bough snapped short off; whereupon the sorrel threw up his hind legs and ran away, dragging the pine bough. He went back towards the village of Leicester, half a mile off. In a moment he had turned a corner and was out of sight.

We looked after him as long as we could; then we looked at each other.

X.

THE FINISH ; DULCE DOMINI.

IT is not conducive to amiability to be left on a hill-side with a carriage and two or three quarts of oats. When we had looked at each other for a short time, my friend asked if I thought the inhabitants of Leicester were accustomed to seeing a horse travelling by himself, attired only in a hitch-rope and a pine bough.

"Let us pray that somebody may stop him!" I cried fervently.

There was no guessing where he would go. If we had tarried at all in Leicester, it might have been probable that the horse would go back to the stable where he had been fed. But we had driven on without paus-

ing until we came to this lovely slope. Something must be done. We set out to walk rapidly along the road we had just traversed. The sorrel might conclude to go as far as Brookfield: my companion suggested that he might even retrace his steps to Catskill; and we could follow, telegraphing as we went.

"There is one fact which makes me hope," I said, as we panted on, "and that is that the group of men around the post-office in Leicester stared at us as we went by as if we had been a circus. If they don't recognize the sorrel, even in the disguise of a pine branch, then I don't know the nature of men who lounge at a store in a village."

Beside the inconvenience caused by this flight of our steed, we both suffered from a dreadful sense of humiliation. We knew what every one who heard of the incident would

say: "Just like a couple of women!" If a man had met with this misfortune, nothing would ever have been thought of it.

We came to two roads, one going northerly, and one towards the village. It was easy to follow our sorrel, however, for the branch brushed a wide path on the gravel. He had gone to Leicester. On the way we made a vow that if we ever found the horse, nothing should make us divulge this incident of our journey. If we did not find him, we were still to be silent, and to assert that the sorrel died very suddenly of colic. What was the sacrifice of truth compared with our disgrace? Had we not been entreated to go on our journey with Deacon Langley's mare? A pine branch laid heavily on that animal would not have made him do this thing.

We were within a few rods of the

post-office when my friend clutched my arm and pointed tragically. Yes, in the yard of a house were two men and three boys, and in the midst of this group, held by his rope, was our sorrel, head up and ears forward. While we looked, five more men from different directions joined the company, slouching up from road and fields. Speaking for myself, I felt an almost irresistible impulse to turn and fly, sacrificing the horse and the rope in my retreat. But no. With an appearance of calmness we walked forward. The circle opened slightly. All eyes were fixed with boring intentness upon us. In the intenseness of this masculine interest I think the rate of expectoration slightly increased.

I pushed my companion forward, and she pushed me. It happened that she was a trifle in advance, so she felt impelled to speak.

"We are very much obliged to you, gentlemen," she said sweetly. "But we will not trouble you any further. We will take the horse now."

She essayed to lay hold of the rope, but the man holding it did not seem inclined to give it up.

"Tain't ben no trouble," he said. "I happened to ketch him jest in front of here. I took the liberty to take this piece of pine tree off of him, not supposin' you was partic'lar 'bout lievin' it on any further. Be ye?"

We both hastened to assure him that the pine had fully served its purpose, and we were willing to part with it henceforth forever. Again we tried to take the rope.

"I guess I 'll lead him 'long to where you 've got your buggy," said the man. "P'raps I can be useful in harnessin' of him. Know how to harness?"

We said we did. He was very kind, but we could do all that was necessary.

"I guess I 'll lead him," he repeated, and we felt ourselves helpless. We could be deeply grateful, however, that no one else attempted to follow us as we resumed the march back.

"Ain't much used to horses, be ye?" asked the man.

I told him in my most dignified tone that I had driven, more or less, since I was a child. I thought I knew something about horses.

"Wall," he responded, "you 've learnt one thing 'bout 'em to-day, ain't ye?"

"What?"

"Why, not to hitch 'em to pine branches not much bigger'n yer finger. Besides pine 's 'bout 's brittle as a pipe stem."

No one made any response to this.

We went along through the thick dust of the road, very meek, notwithstanding our air of bravado. The man harnessed the sorrel. Then he leaned against one of the shafts a few moments while he told us that we ought to be thankful that nothing worse had happened, for this here animal did n't seem to be a woman's horse.

"Any way," he said, "'tain't fittin' for women to be goin' 'bout alone. If any thing happens, they can't gen'lly do nothin', you know——"

"We are very grateful to you," I interrupted, in any thing but a tone of gratitude. I gathered up the lines.

"You 're welcome," he said, lifting himself heavily from the shaft. "Be glad to do as much any time. Goin' fur?"

We did not answer him. The sorrel started on at that moment,

and made good time to Worcester, which town we entered a half hour before sunset, in a very gloomy frame of mind.

We hardly looked about us that evening, and tried early to hide our chagrin in sleep. If you are unlucky in business, if you are suffering from a disappointment in love, if you have met with a humiliating accident with a horse, take a driving trip through some lovely country, and I will warrant that the hours in the open air will insure you deep sleep through the night. We slept profoundly, and awakened the next day feeling that it would be possible for us to outlive the shame of the afternoon before.

We prowled about the town all the forenoon. We had but about thirty miles now between us and home. The sense of distance was gone. That very night we should,

God willing, rest in the old farm-house.

It was at Worcester that the white horse, spotted with its own blood, fell dead, having brought the word on April 19, 1775, of the battle of Lexington. But on went the rider, still farther, with the soul-stirring news. Main Street now, with its shops and its business, does not look much as it did that day when the panting horseman came rushing up its length. This town is built among hills upon the Blackstone River. It is the second city in the State. I am quoting from a sketch of the city which we read, according to our custom. As usual, however, we were more interested in the past than in the present, and while we looked at churches and school-houses, our minds were rather with its old history than with the visible prosperity of to-day.

It pleased us to know that the Saxon name means War-Castle. The thirty families settled here in 1669 were very soon made to leave, the Indians laying the whole place desolate. The settlers built a church something like a fort, and every man "was ordered to carry to Sunday service his musket and six rounds of ammunition":

> Each man equipped on Sunday morn,
> With psalm-book, shot, and powder-horn,
> And looked in form, as all must grant,
> Like the ancient true church-militant.

It was in Worcester that some misguided, bold Scotch Presbyterians had the effrontery to build a church in the year 1720. They soon learned their mistake. What right had they to worship God after their manner? They were taught a lesson. The Puritans could not allow a "cradle of heresy" to thrive in their very midst. They destroyed the

Presbyterian church. We should be grateful that they did not hang the Presbyterians. There is no record of such hanging, so it is to be supposed that the Scotchmen were permitted to live. However much we admire them and are thankful for them, we are constrained to acknowledge that the Puritans were not what is called liberal-minded; and we are glad that we were not Quakers or Presbyterians in that time.

We started from Worcester immediately after our noon dinner, and took the road to Milford. The west was black with "thunder heads"; the air was hot and close, and sweet with an "amber scent of odorous perfume"; every wayside flower and shrub was throwing out its fragrance. The robins sang with continuous and reckless jollity, as they do on an extremely warm day, as if only in such temperature were

they absolutely happy. Sometimes an oriole darted like a flame across our path, lighted near, and fluted forth its notes. Brown-thrashers sounded as if they were getting drunk with their own melody, they went on so from note to note, accomplishing every thing they attempted. The cicada's sibilant cry was sifting through every other sound. There were many fields of grass mown, and men were hurrying to rake some into cocks; others were pitching up huge forkfuls to half-loaded carts. Of course we should be caught in a shower; but we urged the sorrel, and he responded nobly, taking long, swift strides over the smooth road.

In a few moments we saw that it was raining behind us, perhaps a quarter of a mile away. We looked eagerly for some barn or shed in which to find shelter; but the houses

on the way here, if they had barns, had them full of their own carriages. On we went, the horse stretching forth in a way that made us forgive him for his escapade at Leicester. In five minutes the shower had not touched us; we saw the rush of the rain on the hills behind us. In five minutes more we knew that we were ahead of the cloud; it now veered off to the east; we had escaped a drenching, thanks to the sorrel. We pulled him up and allowed him to walk up a long slope and down the other side. By that time the clouds were piling themselves still more to the east, and we were safe from any showers they might send down.

But it was hot. When we drove through the town of Milford, the horse showed that he had been going fast. I knew that we seemed to be two very cruel women to drive an animal thus in such a temperature.

We ostentatiously made our steed walk by the shoe factories, whose windows revealed the workmen.

Bellingham is a few miles to the southeast of Milford, and is one of the tiniest of villages, whatever its extent of township may be. I suppose its business must be the tilling of the soil, for so far as one may see there is nothing else done. It has a little settlement, a little church, a little monument to soldiers of the Rebellion, a little store containing the post-office. It was very still. Apparently no one looked from a window to see the "passin'."

Franklin, however, is a thrifty, growing place on the New York and New England Road. It has straw factories, and rubber works, and felting mills, and I know not what. After Bellingham it seemed like a very great place indeed. It is familiar also. Are we not constantly driving

to Franklin for this thing and that? For our house is not more than four miles away now, over a hilly, woody road from which can be had lovely glimpses of the Milton Blue Hill at our left.

I must not forget to state that we stopped at our post-office and found a package wrapped about many times with a very strong cord, and addressed in a hand that was unformed, but inclined to flourishes. When the parcel was unfolded, it was found to contain two Indian arrow-heads. Then we knew that the boy who came to our aid in the matter of the sponge near Amherst had kept his word; he had been better than his word, for he had only promised one arrow-head, and here were two.

It is good to travel in a buggy with the friend of your heart. It is good to be *en rapport* with the simplicity and the strength of the hills.

But it is sad when the end of the journey comes. Is it not something, however, to be able to say, "I, too, have been in Arcadia"?

THE END.

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